

a. Partial not total.

This is the force of the word "in part." (Rom. 11:25). It points to the fact that some and not all are blinded. This is the testimony of Elijah (1 Kings 19:18). The apostacy of the nation was never complete! So Paul argues in this Epistle (Rom. 11:5, 17). This is a wonderful truth and does truly take the sting away from the term "blindness." Some will see the truth as the Spirit of God moves upon them in grace! But Paul is describing the present situation for he notes this blindness has "happened" (Greek: come to be) on the Jews for this present Age. There is a peculiar arrangement with the nation for the present time.

b. Beneficial not fatal.

God has a glorious purpose in the present condition of the nation. It is stated: 1) To get Gentiles saved (Rom. 11:11) and also 2) To get Jews to be jealous (Rom. 11:11). The sad case of the Jews is working out the intent of Almighty God.

c. Temporal not final.

Here is the core of the mystery. The O.T. shows Jewish callousness. The N.T. shows Jewish ignorance of God's plan for them and the Messiah even unto His rejection! But it will not always be so! There will be a change. This is the significance of the word "until." It means the blindness will continue till the "fullness of the Gentiles" and then it will come to a cessation. The "fullness of the Gentiles" is a number known only to God whom He is calling to salvation during this Age of Grace (Acts 15:13-18). It is in antithesis to "fullness of Jews" (Rom. 11:12). When this time does come, then "all Israel shall be saved" (Rom. 11:26). This means those living at that time (Ezek. 20:34-38).

Conclusion Today Israel as a nation is reachable for God (Rom. 3:22). Some of them will be saved, but not all. We must witness to them. There is coming a day when Messiah will appear. He is their Deliverer. At His coming, He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob (Rom. 11:26). The New Covenant with the nation will obtain (Rom. 11:27; Jer. 31:33-34, 37). What a day that will be! Let us go on to serve HIM! Amen.

Introduction

1. The failure of many Jewish people to come to Christ as Saviour has led some Christian workers to disappointment. Their spiritual blindness has, therefore, been the subject of much study and prophetic concern.

2. There are those who believe that Israel has been absorbed into the church. This conjecture of the amillennialists has no foundation in the Scriptures whatsoever. It is only the figment of the mind which refuses to take a literalist's viewpoint of the Bible.

3. Dispensationalists see a future for Israel. They make clear distinctions between the groups of people extant before God (1 Cor. 10:32). Like Paul, they confess that God has not given up on the nation (Rom. 10:1, 2). This whole body of truth needs to be learned thoroughly by the saints of God.

4. Give attention from your heart to the true facts of the case. Here are some of them from the text:-

1. DEFINITIONS

a. Israel.

Without doubt this is most important. This is the nation chosen by God (Isa. 41:8). There is nothing in the Bible which would suggest that they have ceased to be an entity before God (cf. Gen. 32:28; Rom. 9:4, 5). It is true that some of these physical descendants are not the remnant according to God's election, but they are identified as Israelites physically (Rom. 9:6; Gal. 6:16).

b. Blindness.

The term was used as a medical word and spiritually has the same connotation. There is, therefore, spiritual dullness involved. Speaks of hardness, callousness (cf. Mark 3:5; Eph. 4:18).

c. Mystery.

This word is used 27 times in the N.T. It means to make known truth which had not been given previously to the initiated. Believers are now "let in" on divine secrets! This teaches that Israel not only was blind, but is blind!

d. Church.

This is a distinct group of Jews and Gentiles who have been baptized into the Body of Christ (1 Cor. 12:13). This Body is called the Church (Eph. 1:22-23). It started at Pentecost and will conclude at the Rapture of the saints, the next big event on the calendar of God (1 Thess. 4:13-18).

2. DISTINCTIONS.

Historically, Israel has given every indication of their spiritual hardness of heart. Take a look at each major era as outlined in the Bible. The support for this is patent:-

a. Mosaic period.

Clearly the Word teaches the dullness of heart for God in this period (Ex. 32:9, Deut. 29:4).

b. Judge's period.

Far from following God's plan for them, Israel prepared to do as they please. It was a hard nation and ended up in self-destruction (Judges 21:25).

c. Prophetic period.

It is sad to read how God sent the prophets to Israel to bring them to Himself, but they refused to respond (Isa. 6:9-13). The course led to the Babylonian captivity (2 Kings 17).

d. Christian period.

Reams of passages might be amassed to show the

hard hearted nation. The King of Israel came, but they turned Him away (John 1:11-13). But look at the texts of the Bible and you will weep (Matt. 13:13-17 cf. with Isa. 6:9-13; Luke 20:14-18; 23:34; John 5:43; 1 Thess. 2:15, 16).

3. DESCRIPTIONS.

There are three areas in which the blindness of the nation was particularly evident. Here they are:-

a. Personally.

It is true that Israel is called the "servant of the Lord" (Isa. 43:10), yet they did not faithfully understand this calling. Hence, blindness filled their vision in this matter.

b. Messianically.

This is evidently true because they did not accept Him and do not today (2 Cor. 3:14-16). But when their hearts turn to Him (2 Cor. 3:16), then the veil will be removed also! Some have been led by this to consider Israel as double-blinded! However, the reference which states that men are blinded has particular reference to the Gentiles and in no way must Jews be considered doubly-difficult to bring to Christ (cf. 2 Cor. 4:3, 4 with Rom. 3:22).

c. Morally.

By this is meant the fact that Israel has not generally seen the righteousness of God through Christ, but have sought to establish their own legally (Rom. 10:1-10 cf. with Deut. 6:25). Whereas one might have expected Israel to be open to the Word and the Lord, she has failed miserably and manifested a dullness of understanding!

4. DISCUSSIONS.

To adequately get at the root of the problem of Israel's blindness, the truth is set down in the Word that their blindness is:-